

FACT SHEET

SENIOR WORKER ADVOCATE OFFICE

Purpose

The purpose of the Senior Worker Advocate Office (SWAO) is to promote public awareness concerning the employment of senior workers and the importance of the aging workforce to California's skilled labor pool, economic development, and global competitiveness. The SWAO also advises the Director of the Employment Development Department (EDD) on issues relating to the employment of senior workers.

In addition, the SWAO publicizes the benefits of employing senior workers, disseminates information about successful senior worker programs, and dispels negative stereotypes of workers age 40 and over. The SWAO also promotes coordination and cooperation among agencies and organizations that provide employment information, recruitment, training, and placement services for senior workers.

The SWAO staffs the Senior Worker Advocate Council (Council) which is composed of volunteer members representing business, labor, senior advocacy groups, veterans, and government. The Council advises EDD's Director on issues relating to the employment of older workers.

Background

The Senior Worker Advocate Office was established by EDD's Director on January 1, 2000. The staff is current on senior worker issues and strives to be California's foremost authority on topics concerning workers 40 and over.

The SWAO was developed to continue the important work of the California Task Force for the Employment of Older Workers, which sunset at the end of 1999. The SWAO will maintain EDD's commitment to achieving full employment for all qualified workers, including workers 40 and over.

Major Activities

The primary goal of the SWAO is to promote the employment of senior workers in California. To accomplish this, the SWAO engages in various activities and projects, including:

- **Information and Referral.** Provides information and referral services to employers, senior workers, and public and private agencies that are dedicated to senior worker employment and training.

Resources for employers include:

- Referrals to senior worker sources.
- Information on best practices in firms hiring senior workers.
- Self-assessment guide to review company utilization of older workers.
- Speakers bureau on senior worker issues.

Resources for senior workers include:

- Networks to sources of jobs and training.
- Information on skills in demand.
- Referrals to resources for workers 40 and over.

- **California Mentoring Works.** Assists in developing and implementing senior mentoring programs in local areas throughout California. This program matches professional seniors with Welfare-to-Work participants, utilizing the experience and wisdom of the senior to increase post-job retention. The SWAO is technical advisor to local areas with current senior mentoring programs.

- **Senior Worker Outreach.** Promotes public awareness regarding the employment of senior workers, including publicizing the benefits of employing senior workers through public service announcements; sharing information about successful senior worker programs through the SWAO section of EDD's Web site (www.edd.ca.gov/swaoind.htm); and dispelling negative stereotypes of older workers through news releases and public presentations.

- **Governor's Older Worker and Exemplary Employer Recognition Awards Luncheon.** Conducts an annual luncheon to recognize outstanding senior workers and exemplary contributions of employers that increase employment and training opportunities for senior workers.
- **Educational Resource.** Develops and distributes literature relating to the job abilities and needs of senior workers. The SWAO has developed a training program called "The Silver Toolbox" that is geared toward eliminating attitudinal barriers to employment of senior workers. The SWAO also coordinates a statewide media campaign each September for National "Older Workers Week." Develops a symposium on important senior worker topics, and assembles a panel of experts on workforce issues to discuss the topics.
- **Technical Assistance.** Educates and collaborates with employers, labor unions, public agencies, the general public, and private sector employers regarding the work and training needs, abilities, and benefits of employing senior workers.

For more information, please visit the SWAO section of EDD's Web site at www.edd.ca.gov/swaoind.htm, or contact:

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For additional information on EDD's services for older workers, please see the "Services to Older Worker Fact Sheet," DE 8714DD.